

## Confirmation chapter 10

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Summary: Morgan faces some disturbing and strange hours on his own, beeing lost from his team...

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“Do we have to tie you down, to make you lay still?” Julia chided, as Morgan had tried to get up again, for the N'th time. “I'm telling you, I'm OK. It doesn't hurt! And I'm sick and tired of just laying here!” Morgan whined, sounding almost like his old self again. “Do I have to remind you, that only twenty-four hours ago, you were as good as dead? You have a punctured lunge, and a hole in your heartsack that needs to heal proper! That's serious!” Morgan scowled at Julia, knowing she'd give him a numb-drug again if he didn't comply. “Now, lay back and relax!” She ordered. Yale sat patiently on the chair, waiting for her to finish redressing Morgan's wounds. “I'd like to have a word with him, alone, Julia?” Yale said, when she was through. “Will that be possible?” She nodded, and left the pod. Morgan gave Yale a query look. “Anything wrong?” He said, sitting up, looking slightly nervous. “No, of-course not.” Yale smiled, and patted his arm reassuringly. “I just want to hear your side of the story. What happened after Walman and Baines left you that day?” Morgan eased back into his pillows, trying to think. “Well, I... heard a twig snap. - There's a lot of Grendlers 'round here! - And then I ran. I thought of coming back to the life-pod, but it was getting dark, and then there was these two or three Grendlers tracking me, and I guess I panicked, and the next thing I know, I'm heading up the ridge behind this pod, trying to get in, opening the Digi-lock...” The whole story just spilled out of him, only intercepted by Yale's questions. “And the last thing I barely remember is Walman and Danziger working on emptying the pod.” Morgan took a deep drink from the cup Yale handed to him. “You're exactly shure that's what happened?” He asked. Morgan nodded. “Why?” He breathed. “Well, we found you six days ago, near dead from blood-loss, right here.” Yale made a gesture. “The only thing keeping you alive, was that you thought you were OK. You were in... denial. What ever really happened to you, were to much for you, so you made up a different reality, inside your mind, where everything

were under your control.Â» Morgan lay quiet for a while. Â«I were in V.R., without the gear?Â» He whispered incredulous. Â«Both yes and no. As your blood-loss increased, you started fantasizing, hallucinating, loosing grip on what was what.Â» Morgan emptied his cup, wiping his mouth. Â«I think I know what I am now.Â» He said low, with a disgusted mine. Yale looked him right in the eye. Â«You are exactly what you want to be, Morgan. Don't let the past take that away from you! You are in control of what ever abilities they gave you! You always have been, remember?Â» Morgan looked the older man deep into his eyes, seeing nothing but pride and truth in there. Â«You will help me, then? To figure out this 'ability'?Â» He whispered. Yale nodded, smiling warmly. Â«We'll start as soon as you're well enough.Â» Morgan sighed. Then he sat up, looking seriously at Yale. Â«You won't tell anyone about the V.R.-cylinders, will you? I mean... You know...?Â» Yale smiled warmly back. Â«Not a word. We'll keep that part of the story to our selves.Â» Â«Thanks.Â» Morgan said quietly, easing back into his bed. Danziger knocked on the door, entering with a big grin that Morgan found disturbing. Â«Julia say's it's enough for now. Morgan needs his rest, and his dinner.Â» He placed a bowl of soup in-front of Morgan, who took one look at it, knowing it to be the reason of Danziger's grin. Â«I hate chicken-soup!Â» He protested, but had to eat it anyway, as Danziger supervised his every move until the soup was gone down where it should. Â«Good boy!Â» He grinned, picking up the empty bowl. Â«Now it's time for your nap!Â» Morgan just sighed, and slid down under his blankets, mumbling something to him self. Â«Nighty-night!Â» Danziger chuckled, and tucked him in. Â«Will you stop treating me like a baby?!Â» Morgan hissed, and brushed him away. Â«Woops, sorry!Â» Danziger tried to look serious, and backed away. Â«He's just relieved you're OK. He just don't know how to say so.Â» Bess smiled, and sat down on Morgan's bedside. Â«And he's absolutely right. You should rest.Â» She leaned forward and gave him a kiss on the cheek. Â«Allright. But only because you say so.Â» He said, loosing himself in her beautiful blue-green eyes.

Julia and Danziger sat quietly, staring into the camp-fire, as Yale finished re-telling most of Morgan's story of what had happened. Â«He doesn't remember what really happened to him?Â» Danziger asked. Â«Not yet. But I think he will.Â» Yale said. Julia wrinkled her brows. Â«Does he have a twin-brother, or is the brother just another self? Or a make-believe?Â» She mused, taking a sip from her coffee. Â«And all this about killing his own twin in cold blood, and dead people coming alive?Â» Danziger shivered in the chilly breeze. Â«Who knows.Â» Yale smiled sadly. Â«And this Genesis Project...?Â» Julia looked at Yale: Â«I've heard it mentioned as something that happened long time ago. Some hundred years ago. Long before Morgan was even born?Â» Yale sighed. Â«It did happen, yes.Â» Â«Morgan might be older than we know. They could have kept him in cold-sleep for ages.Â» Danziger mumbled. Their quiet conversation was suddenly interrupted by the perimeter alert, and they got on their feet, looking into the darkness. Seconds later, they heard Baines howl with fear, as he came crashing through the woods, wild-eyed and screaming. Â«What the devil is...Â» Danziger's curse choked in his throat as a ragged figure staggered into the camp, holding out a muddied gun-holster in its rotting hand. The figure came staggering slowly towards Danziger, offering him the weapon. Â«Take it!Â» Yale whispered intently into Danziger's ear, as the panicked mechanic tried to back away from the awful apparition: Â«Take it! Â» Fear and bile threatening to out do eachother, Danziger shakily reached out a hand, taking the gun between two fingers, retching. The near de-faced corpse seemed to

smile pleased, and fell to the ground in a putrid heap. Again, Danziger run around the corner of the pod, throwing up. "What's going on?" Bess, having heard the commotion, came out of the pod: "You woke Morgan!" She stopped dead in her tracks, seeing the corpse and the shocked faces. Danziger, having reached the limits of what he could take, stormed by her with a roar, into the pod. "John, no!" Julia cried, and hurried after him.

Morgan jumped up as the berserking mechanic came charging into the pod, right at him. He stood frozen to the spot, looking wide-eyed at the man. How come he was moving in slow motion? And where was the sound? Poor guy. He looked totally out of it. Something seemed to have made him loose it, all together. As Danziger came closer, Morgan just barely stepped out of his way just as he would have rammed him, seeing the rageing man hit the wall instead and go down. "This is weird!" He muttered to himself as Julia came sailing in after him, checking him with her medi-glove. Then Yale came into his vision-field, and the world returned to normal again. "Morgan? Can you hear me?" Yale looked into his eyes, worried. "Shure." Morgan muttered. "What's this all about?" He had to sit down, as his knees was giving in on him. "You don't know?" Yale asked strictly. Morgan's face got pale, as he looked pleadingly at Yale, shaking his head. "All I know is that I dreamt that I found the gun in the mud-slide and brought it back. Then Danziger comes charging in here, looking like he's about to kill me?" He said hurt, looking down at the moaning mechanic, just coming to his senses. "Come here." Yale helped Morgan on his feet, leading him outside. "You did not deliver the gun. He did." He pointed at the remains laying crumpled by the fire-place. "Danziger buried that man three days ago. By then he had been dead for two days already." Morgan's eyes widened, and his nostrils flared, as he fought back the panic that threatened to overcome him. Carefully, he made his way towards the fire, staring transfixed at the corpse. It had been a man, about his own age, seemingly same height, dark hair and beard, closely cropped... He was wearing the remains of a uniform of some sort. Next to him on the ground lay the gun, where Danziger had dropped it. "That's no Pen!" Morgan gasped. "That's a Council sweeper!" He recognized the uniform as the same as that man visiting the doctor-lady in the nursery had been wearing. "A what?" Walman said, even though he heard him the first time. "A sweeper? Here?" Cameron breathed, looking worriedly about him with all senses alert. Morgan was suddenly aware that everybody was staring at him. "Morgan, you shouldn't be out here." Julia took a firm hold of him, wanting to lead him back to the pod. "Scan him!" He said, pointing towards the corpse. "Morgan, he's dead." She said, tugging at his sleeve to make him move. "Yes I know! I killed him!" He hissed. "Scan him! I want to know!" Julia released him, and pulled on her medi-glove. "Here, you'll need this." Baines held out a oxygen-mask to her, but she reclined. "We had to do worse than this at the academy." She smiled wryly. "Male, proximate thirty-five, healthy..." She started her examination: "Odd, he seems to have been drained for blood." "Grendlers?" Baines asked fearfully. "No, Mag-Pro blast to his guts. It didn't kill him right away though. He must have bled to death, slowly..." She straightened up quickly, stepping back. "This can't be right?" She checked her medi-glove. "Same blood-type as me, right?" Morgan said low: "Even the genetic structure, right? It's identical." She looked at him with pain in her eyes. "You killed him? Your twin?" "As good as." Morgan admitted. "What happened, Morgan? Do you remember now?" Yale placed a blanket over Morgan's shoulders, leading him from the fire-place to the log

outside the pod, and had him sit down. Morgan closed his eyes. "I was running for my life along the river-bank, towards the life-pod. As I came over the edge, stumbling down into the basin, I heard someone following me. I knew it wasn't Grendlers. They don't sound like that. I thought it was Walman and Baines, so I stopped, turning round, and faced two of the ugliest penal-colonists I've seen! I thought I was dead meat! But instead, they grinned, and patted my back, said taking the beard was the smartest thing I'd done since we came there, and had I finally broken the code to the Digi-lock, since I was wearing new threads? I knew they had to mistake me for someone else. Besides, it was dark, so they probably didn't see too well. They led me straight up to the pod here, expecting me to open it for them. Of-course I couldn't. I didn't know the code. Then things started to get ugly." Morgan grimaced at the thought. "They got angry with you." Yale nodded: "Then what?" "The uglier one pulled out a vibro-blade, while the other tied him to a tree. Then they started cutting little stripes of skin of him, slice by slice, trying to make him tell them the code. Quite a spectacle. He was braver than you'd give him credit for. He only fainted twice." They all startled, as a uniformed figure stepped out into the fire-light. "We knew our target was among you, so we waited here. You had to come. We planted this pod here for you to find it. Jason got 'friendly' with the local population while we waited. That costed him his life in the end. The ugly one gut-shot him as he tried to stop the Pen's from having a little fun. When they realized they had the wrong guy, they stabbed him. Leaving him to bleed to death together with his newfound brother here." The man kicked the corpse with the toe of a spit-polished boot. "Then the darnedest thing happened. Jason got up, as if he wasn't hurt at all, and shot the two uglies. Now how could he do that when he was unconscious?!" He stopped right in-front of Morgan. "I came here to wipe you out, as the abnormality you are, but now it seems I'll have to take you with me instead. The council will be most pleased. Or maybe not. Their biggest failiour turned out to have outsmarted them all." He grabbed Morgan's left arm, hoisting him up from the log. "Let's see, now. They stabbed you, where? Here?" He knocked Morgan hard in the stomach, making him double over. Julia jumped to her feet, but the man just looked at her, stopping her in mid stride. "Don't worry, Dr. Heller. He's fine. He'll be a little sore for a while, but..." The man dropped Morgan to the ground with a horrified yelp. The corpse by the fire-place had gotten up, and came straight at him. Morgan breathed heavy and in gasps, closing his eyes as sweat beaded itself on his forehead. Before the uniformed man had a chance to react, the corpse dived for the hand-gun, and shook it out of the holster, pressing the trigger. Nothing happened. The gun was full of mud. "Nice little freakshow, Martin!" The man snarled, and kicked Morgan savagely in the thigh. "But you're coming with me..." A blast from a Mag-Pro cut him off, and he dropped to the ground with a smoldering hole through his chest. "I like to hear the rest of the story now." Danziger said, coming out of the pod. "There isn't much..." Morgan moaned, rubbing his thigh, thinking. "I tied him down from the tree, carried him over to the pod, and placed him inside, on the blankets where you found him, then I went into the woods, to find him." He nodded towards the dead man. "He never told me it was my own brother we were here to kill! I headed back towards our camp, but it had started raining, so I kinda lost my bearings, and came out on the edge of the woods. I slipped and fell into the mud-slide. Banged my head pretty bad. I fainted, I guess." Yale looked concerned at Morgan. "And what do Morgan remember from all this?" Morgan shook his head sharply, wrinkling his brows. "He untied me, heaved me over his shoulder and carried me down to the

pod. I helped him with the code on the Digi-lock, and he carried me inside and placed me on the blankets, then he collapsed on the floor, bleeding heavily. I couldn't help him! I don't know what happened then. I must have fainted, 'cause when I came to again, you were all here, and he was gone.Â» He looked up at the pale faces around him. Â«That explains the amount of blood on the floor as well as in the blankets.Â» Walman said quietly: Â«It was just too much for one man to have bled that much, and still live.Â» Julia sighed: Â«That's why he's drained for blood. He bled to death inside the pod.Â» Yale looked at Morgan, who leaned heavily on Bess, burrowing his face in her hair, sobbing.

The next day they spent packing, making ready to leave. Morgan was just about well enough to travel, and wanted to leave the place behind him as soon as possible. Â«There's just one more thing to do before we go.Â» Danziger said, as they eased Morgan down the steep hill behind the supply-pod, and placed him in a 'hammock' suspended from the roll-bars in the back of a TransRover. The others nodded, and they set off towards the life-pod. As they drove by, Morgan could see that they had crammed all the splintered wood from the broken packing-crates into it. Danziger slowed down the vehicle, aimed a flare-gun at the pod-door, and fired. It combusted in flames. Â«Thought we'd give him a proper send off. After all, he saved your life twice. Even if he was dead at the time.Â» Danziger said, concentrating on his driving again. Morgan felt a pang of sadness. Not at the thought of his dead brother; he didn't know the guy, and if he had, he probably wouldn't have liked him either. He stared at the black smoke coiling up into the pale blue sky of the early morning as long as he could see it. Â«Would they have done that if it was me?Â» He thought, looking at the gaunt but smiling faces of his friends around him. Â«Why did they bother to come back for me anyway? All I ever do is get on their nerves, whining and complaining about everything. Sneaking away from my chores...Â»

Danziger looked back into the hold of the TransRover, seeing Morgan looking miserable and lost to thought as usual, and smiled. Â«He's getting better.Â» He smiled to True and Uly. Â«Soon he'll be complaining about something again.Â» Uly said with a wry smile. Â«Then we know that he's well.Â» True smiled back at her father, who laughed. Â«Yeah. Things are not the same without him whining about something, right?Â» They shot teasing glances into the back where Morgan pretended not to have heard them, pretending to be weeery interested in something, studying it intently. Â«Leave him be, you teasers.Â» Bess smiled, and pulled close a thick curtain between the cockpit and the hold. Morgan grinned big, and winked at her. Â«Ouch! Drive carefully, will ya'? I'm hurt!Â» He called out loud, as the vehicle hit a bump. Bess looked up, worried. Â«You OK?Â» Â«Shure.Â» He smiled back, looking strained. She came over to him, wanting to see for her self. Â«Where does it hurt?Â» She prodded and poked him all over, intent on finding out. He looked her deep into the eyes. Â«I must have springed something.Â» He said, solemnly. Â«It feels like it's swelling.Â» He shifted uncomfortably. Bess looked concerned. Â«Where?Â» She laid a weary hand on his chest. Â«Guess.Â» Morgan said quietly, kissing her.

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